

INSIDE:

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care homes

Tabletalk -
your bargaining resource -
will publish four times a year. Its goal is to give CUPE Local bargaining committees, elected officers and servicing representatives useful information for preparing - and negotiating - bargaining demands. Tabletalk's three-hole punch style makes it easy to keep in reference binders. Feel free to make copies or use the material to fit your members' needs. Comments welcome at research@cupe.ca.

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Fighting privatization: CUPE locals score

No matter what you call it - outsourcing, competitive bidding, alternative service delivery, public private partnerships (P3s) or private financing initiatives (PFIs) - many CUPE members have felt the privatization pinch, fought against it and won! Almost three-quarters (71%) of CUPE contracts have contracting-out protection. This is far better than the average Canadian collective agreement: only half (55.3%) contain safeguards against contracting-out.

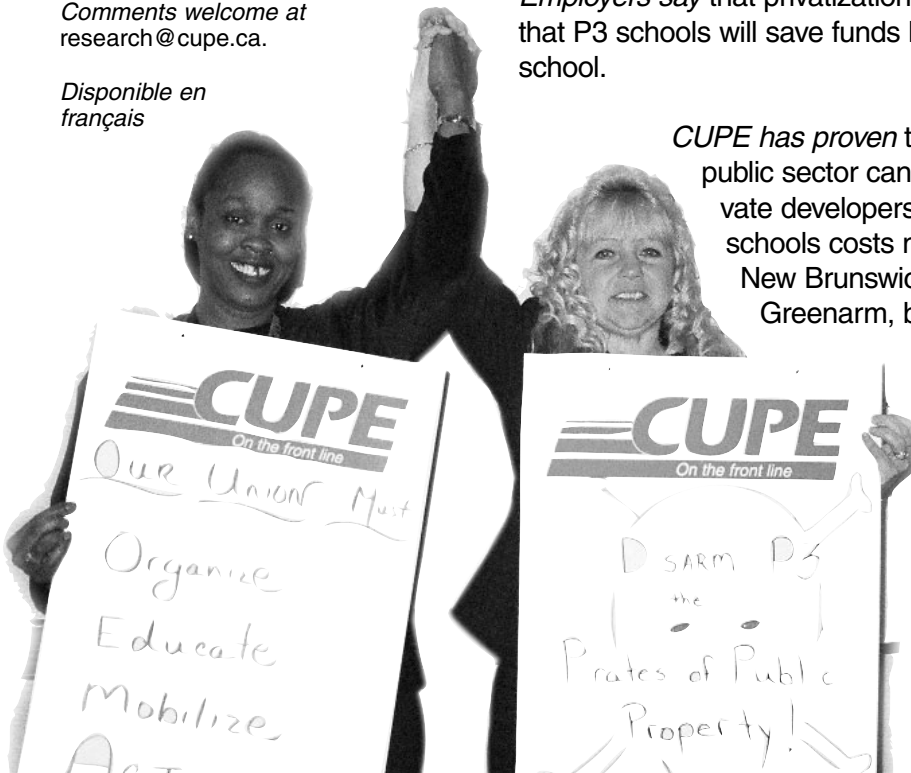
Here is how CUPE locals have countered employers' claims about contracting-out and privatization:

Costs

Employers say that privatization saves money. School boards argue that P3 schools will save funds by having the private sector build the school.

CUPE has proven that privatization costs more. Since the public sector can borrow money more cheaply than private developers, having the private sector build schools costs more. This was the case in Moncton, New Brunswick when the private company, Greenarm, built the Evergreen Park school. The NB Auditor General found that private financing of the school cost nearly \$400,000 more than if the school had been built by the public sector.

Marcia Francis (CUPE 3242, Winnipeg) and Janice Finn (CUPE 543, Windsor) hold up pro-public signs at CUPE's Ways of Winning Conference in Toronto in March.



Service Quality

Employers say that contracting-out improves service quality and the environment.

CUPE has proven that privatization means less service quality. For the residents of the City of Abbotsford, British Columbia, the new P3 hospital means reduced hospital beds and services.

Contracting-out can threaten the environment. When the City of Edmonton, Alberta, hired private contractors to cut the grass in city parks, they damaged over 300 large trees that will cost Edmonton more than \$100,000 to fix or replace.

Jobs

Employers say that contracting-out will not affect jobs.

CUPE has proven that contracting-out will mean fewer jobs at lower rates of pay and benefits. At the Cape Breton Regional Municipality, CUPE 759 members lost jobs when the community's sports and recreation complex was handed over to private operator Serco.

User Fees

Employers say that privatization means no user fees.

CUPE has proven that privatization means user fees. Scotia Learning Centres, the private company that built P3 schools in Halifax, Nova Scotia, charges people \$75/hour to rent double gyms in their schools. The public school board charges \$7.50/hour for a single gym used for youth programs and \$30/hour for adult groups. (cont'd on page 3)

Here are some examples of different approaches CUPE locals have negotiated to address contracting-out and privatization:

CUPE 801 School Division #46 Sunshine Coast, BC

"Article 4.03(f) In order to provide job security for the members of the bargaining unit, the employer agrees that all work or services performed by the employees shall not be sub-contracted, transferred, leased, assigned or conveyed, in whole or in part, to any other plant, person, company or non-unit employee, unless mutually agreed to."

CUPE 2012 and the City of Terrace, BC

"Article 16.01 In order to provide job security for the members of the bargaining unit, the City agrees that all work or services normally performed by the employees shall not be subcontracted, transferred, leased, assigned or conveyed, subject to the following:

- 1. The Employees are qualified to perform the work.*
- 2. The equipment necessary to perform the work is available.*
- 3. The work can be completed in the time available as governed by seasonal conditions.*
- 4. The work can be performed by the City to the economic advantage of the City."*

CUPE Quebec Health and social services sector management bargaining committee, Hospitals management bargaining sub-committees and the Provincial Council of Social Affairs of CUPE, FTQ, Quebec.

"Article 29.01 Any contract between the employer and a third party that directly or indirectly takes away all or part of the duties performed by employees covered by the certification shall commit the employer to the union and the employees as follows:

- 1. First, the union shall be given an opportunity to examine the economic and non-economic basis for the institution's plan and, within a period of no more than sixty (60) days, to propose an alternative capable of meeting the institution's objectives and respecting the parameters of the plan...*
- 3. The employer shall not proceed with any lay-offs, firings or dismissals arising directly or indirectly from such a contract..."*

Saskatoon Civic Employees Union, CUPE 859 and the City of Saskatoon

"Article 38.01 Having regard to the desirability of maintaining a stable workforce and having regard to periodic peaks in workload dictating the necessity of contracting work out, the parties agree as follows:

- a) No permanent employee engaged in a year-round job shall be laid off or have employment terminated as a direct consequence of the City contracting work out of a nature normally performed by C.U.P.E. forces."*

Accountability, Control & Efficiency

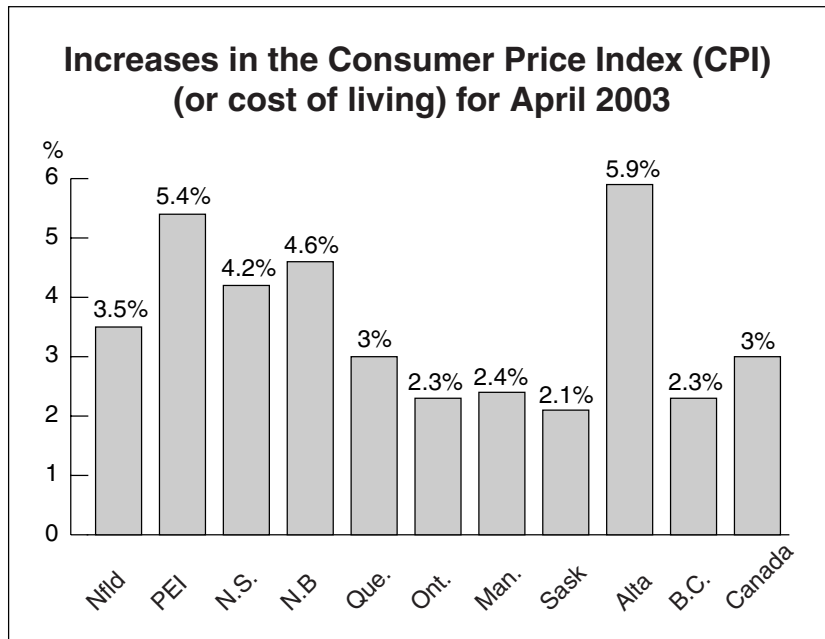
Employers say that contracting-out means more accountability and efficiency, more public control.

CUPE has proven that contracting out means less accountability and efficiency, fewer safety procedures, less public control. In Ontario, home care has been contracted out to a company formerly called Olsten, which was forced to pay the US Department of Justice \$61 million (US) in fines for criminal violations relating to fraud in 1999.

In Halifax, Nova Scotia, the P3 school owned by Scotia Learning Centres was built in the company's new subdivision. The location was decided by the developer with no opportunity for public input.

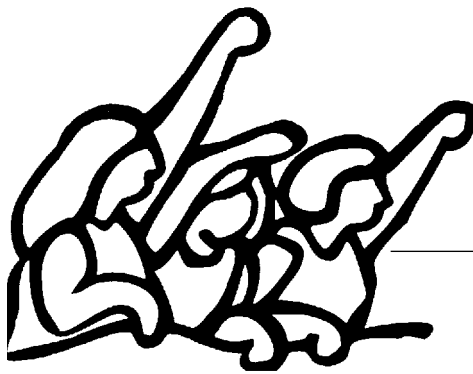
For more information, see *False Savings, Hidden Costs* (research@cupe.ca); *Stop the Plunder! Fighting Contracting-Out and Privatization* (cupe.ca); *False Promises: Presentation to the City of Estevan Regarding Proposals to Contract-Out City Services by CUPE Local 726* (cupe.ca); *P3 Alerts* (cupe.ca/users.asp) or call 1-877-287-3426; *Annual Report on Privatization* (cupe.ca); and *Ways of Winning Conference March 2003: Workshop Documents* (cupe.ca) ■

Inflation reaches 3% (April 2003)



Source: Statistics Canada

- This chart shows inflation as measured by increases in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). In April 2003, the CPI reached 3%, making the cost-of-living 3% higher than in April 2002.
- Energy prices, especially gasoline prices, were the main factor behind the increase. In February, gasoline prices were up 32.1% compared to February 2002. In March 2003, gasoline prices fell slightly bringing the Canadian CPI to 4.3%, down from 4.6% in February.
- Alberta shows the highest rate of inflation, followed closely by PEI, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Saskatchewan had the lowest rate of inflation. BC and Ontario were also lower than the national average.



Using research to protect bargaining gains in BC

Research not only helps you get great bargaining language, it can help protect that language when push comes to shove! In BC, CUPE health care workers, members of the Hospital

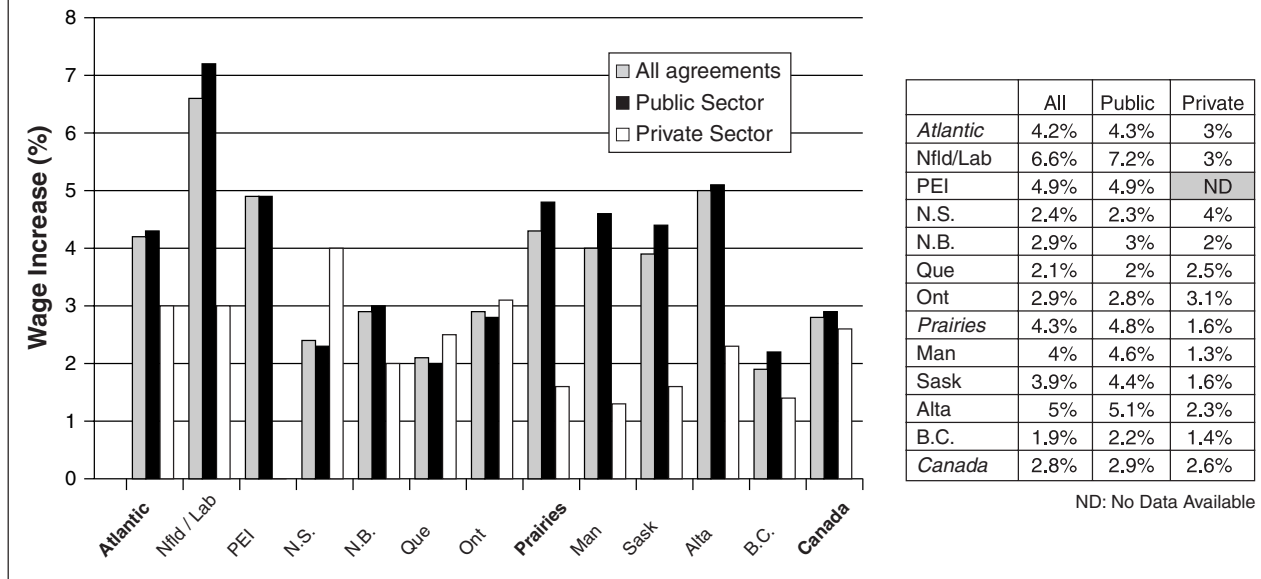
Employees Union (HEU), are using research to fight back against the provincial government's year-old contract-breaking legislation. The BC legislation privatizes public health care services and cuts women's wages substantially.

Research convinced the United Nations (UN) to criticize BC's actions. Along with 11 other groups, HEU submitted a research brief entitled *British Columbia Moves Backward on Women's Equality* to the UN

(Continued page 5)

Wage Settlement Information

Provincial Wage Settlements Major Agreements, Average Annual Increase, 2002



Source: Human Resources Development Canada

- This chart shows major wage settlements for unionized workers in locals with more than 500 members for the last year. See the accompanying chart for the actual percentage increases.
- The figures indicate higher wage settlements in the public sector than the private sector for all provinces except Ontario, Nova Scotia and Quebec.

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in New York City in January. The UN committee had never before criticized an individual province or territory, but the research led them to single out BC for “negatively impact(ing)” on women workers.

As well, a study by Dr. Marjorie Griffin Cohen is being used to challenge the BC government’s attack on women’s wages. Her research found that:

- 1) two-thirds of HEU workers support dependent children and/or adults and only 20 per cent have a partner who works full-time and has extended health benefits,
- 2) HEU members are mainly immigrant women, visible minority women and older women, and
- 3) the government’s proposals will mean that hospital support workers’ wages will “drop to the lowest pay scale in the country for every job category.”

Good research backed by the strength of the membership can be a vital tool in fighting government attacks. ■

Ontario’s Carleton TAs get 100% tuition increase rebate

Teaching assistants at universities are required to be registered students and pay tuition. So every time tuition increases, it’s a wage reduction for TAs. But that’s no longer the case for TAs at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario.



Carleton’s teaching assistants (CUPE 4600, TA union, unit 1) have negotiated 100 per cent tuition increase assistance for each member who works 65 hours or more in any term. Called ‘indexing tuition,’ it means that every time tuition increases, salaries for these TAs will increase dollar for dollar to reflect the tuition hike.

Their new language reads:

“the amount of tuition increase assistance shall be the difference between the current tuition paid by the employee and the reference fee”
(The ‘reference fee’ uses the 2001 academic year as a base to calculate increases.)

The members won the 100 per cent tuition increase rebate because they were prepared to strike to gain it, and it is in the collective agreement to stay. The contract clause is not restricted to domestic fees but also applies to international students.

CUPE 4600 members also got the university’s commitment “to maintain class and tutorial size,” a joint committee on overwork and a five per cent wage increase over a two-year agreement. Congratulations to Carleton University teaching assistants!

Click www.carleton.ca/cupe4600 for more info or e-mail research@cupe.ca ■

Major wage gains for members at Winnipeg personal care homes

It took solidarity, determination and hard bargaining with their private sector employers but the members of CUPE 3753 and CUPE 2719 came out ahead. The workers, mainly immigrant women and women of colour, at

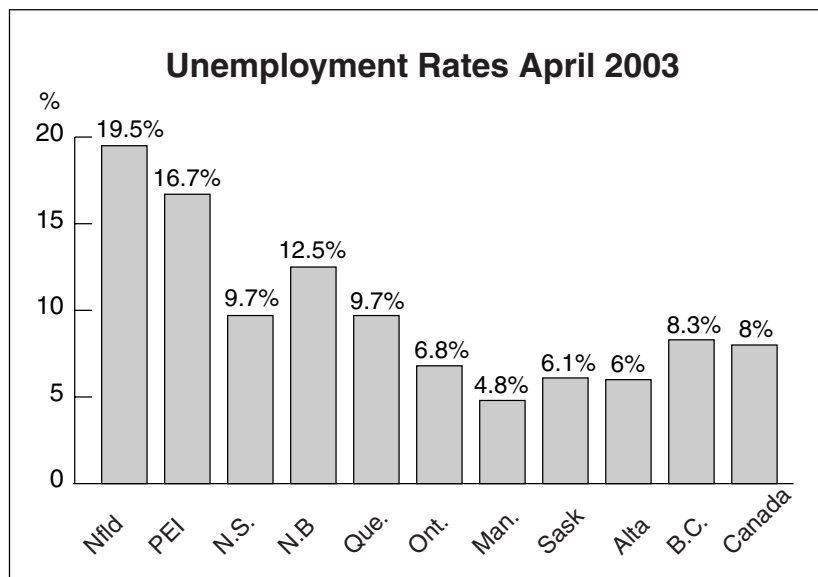
two different personal care facilities in Winnipeg, Manitoba, now have signed three-year contracts with major wage gains. The workers had been paid far less than their colleagues at public facilities.

The 93 members of CUPE 2719 at the Maples Personal Care Home went on strike November 13. After two months braving bitter cold on the picket line, the workers got a settlement on January 11. Their new agreement gives members up to 17 per cent more in annual wage gains (depending on length of service) and a significant increase in shift premiums. The workers also have a new long-term disability plan, and new maternity and parental leave language.

At the River East Personal Care Home, the 64 members of CUPE 3753 achieved not only major wage gains, but made breakthroughs on pension benefits and shift premiums. The workers get a 16 per cent wage increase over the three-year agreement.

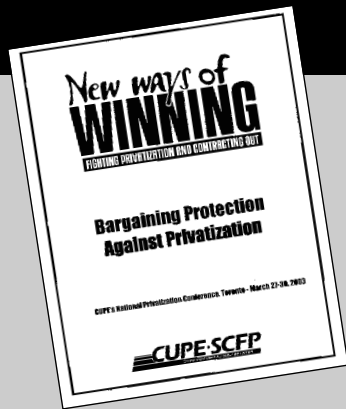
For the first time, they will also get pension benefits through the Health Employees Pension Plan in Manitoba. The members and the employer will each contribute five per cent of an employee's gross earnings. New shift premiums go from \$0.45/hour to \$1/hour for evening shift (4 pm to midnight), \$0.50/hour to \$1.75/hour for night shift, and \$.50/hour to \$1.35/hour for weekend premiums. CUPE 3753 also negotiated improvements in bereavement and union leave, vacation and overtime. ■

How do unemployment rates affect bargaining?



Source: Statistics Canada

- Negotiating in an environment with a low unemployment rate means there is more pressure on employers to negotiate better settlements. With fewer workers looking for jobs, it is harder to recruit and retain staff. As unemployment increases, gains may be harder, depending on the employer. Monitoring the local unemployment rate is a good idea in preparation for bargaining.
- The chart shows unemployment rates in Newfoundland and PEI are substantially above the average in Canada.
- The lowest unemployment rate appears in Manitoba (where there is an NDP government).



Looking for bargaining tools?

Go to cupe.ca for these new CUPE National publications or contact the branch:

- *Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs – Pre-Budget Consultation, winter 2003.*
- *Unemployment Insurance for School Board Workers – Don't Lose Income on Lay-off, winter 2003.*
- *New Ways of Winning Conference Documents – How to Analyze a Contracting-Out Proposal, Making the Case for Public Services, Protecting Hard-Won Gains Against Privateers, PPPs: Behind the Pretty Packaging—a CUPE Power Tool, Bargaining Protection Against Privatization, Documenting What We Do: The Quality is in the Details, Stopping Privatization Before It Starts, Strategy Case Studies March 2003. ■*

Bargaining? Check These Out!

- **Statistics to help bargain parental leave, pay equity, wage increases and other language** – see the *Report of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women*
<http://www.un.org/women-watch/daw/cedaw/>
- **Statistics for negotiating training** – see “Unions and training: A study based on the Adult Education and Training Survey” by Lucie Gilbert (Human Resources Development Canada) in *Education Quarterly Review*, 2003, Vol. 9, No. 1, see www.statcan.ca
- **Labour issues and globalization** – see *Organized Labour in the 21st Century from the International Labour Organization*. Go to <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/inst/download/orglabour.pdf> ■

Calling all CUPE Sisters and Brothers – Send Us Your Great Bargaining Language!

If you would like to see any contract language or your story featured in *Tabletalk*, please write to

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